



VIRGINIA START is a program to support adults with intellectual disability and/or developmental disability, as well as a mental health condition or challenging behavior that is negatively affecting their quality of life.

START emphasizes the prevention of crises before they occur. This is done through early identification of individuals, development of crisis response plans, training, and technical assistance. The underlying philosophy of START is that people's lives go better when everyone involved in supporting the individual work as a team to develop ideas and strategies that will work best for the person.

START offers clinical assessment and support by using the following methods:

- Training and empowerment for individuals, families and caregivers;
- Mobile Crisis Units;
- 24/7 crisis line;
- Positive behavior supports;
- Therapeutic tools;
- Community and home based crisis intervention and stabilization supports;
- A planned therapeutic and respite facility for up to 6 adults; and
- Linking of community resources.

Who is eligible for Virginia START? Individuals age 18 and older with intellectual disability and/or a developmental disability as well as co-occurring behavioral health needs or challenging behaviors that is affecting their quality of life.

Why might someone be referred to Virginia START? Examples of individuals who might be referred include someone who:

- is at risk of losing their home or job due to behavioral concerns;
- has a history of complex medical, behavioral, and/or trauma related issues;
- has exhibited a significant deterioration in functioning over the past 24 months;
- has been hospitalized or admitted to a psychiatric hospital or training center;
- has exhibited behavior that resulted in contact with law enforcement or jail.

Who can make a referral to Virginia START? Referrals may be made by individuals and families, Case Managers/Clinicians, or other natural supports in a person's life.

How do I make a referral to Virginia START? See the contact information in your region below.

When will Virginia START be ready to take referrals? The five START teams across Virginia are in different stages of development. Please use the contact information below to discuss with your region's START staff.



Contact Information for Regional START Programs

Charlottesville and Surrounding Areas

START Director - Kelly Watson

Kelly.watson@eastersealsucp.com (540) 259-1028

Jarret Stone, LCSW

Jarret.stone@eastersealsucp.com (919) 943-7585

Northern Virginia

START Director – Philippe Kane

Philippe.kane@eastersealsucp.com (571) 409-0377

Jarret Stone, LCSW

Jarret.stone@eastersealsucp.com (919) 943-7585

Southwest Virginia

START Director - Denise Hall, LCSW

info@swvastart.org (855) 88-START (855) 887-8278 Fax: (540) 267-3403

Richmond and Surrounding Areas

START Director - Ron Lucas, LPC

lucasr@rbha.org (855) 282-1006.

Southeast Virginia/Tidewater Area

START Director - Dona M. Sterling-Perdue, MSW

donas@hnncsb.org (855) 80-START (855-807-8278)

Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

State Liaison: Bob Villa, Office of Developmental Services

Bob.villa@dbhds.virginia.gov (804) 371-4696